

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-11, 13, 14, 16-18, and 21-24 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 13, and 21 being independent. Claim 14 is withdrawn, as being drawn to a non-elected species. Claims 1 and 13 are amended. Claims 12, 15, 19, and 20 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 21-24 are newly added and read on the elected species.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claims 5, 12, and 15 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

§ 103 Rejection

Claims 1, 3, 4, 7-11, 13, 16, 17, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,236,177 (Tamm). Claims 1-3, 6, 8-11, 13, and 16-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,378,844 B1 (Weaver). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejections, and in the interest of expediting prosecution, independent claims 1 and 13 have been amended to include the features of allowable claims 12 and 15, respectively. Also, new independent claim 21 essentially corresponds to allowable claim 5 rewritten in independent form, including the features of the

base and intervening claims. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 13, and 21 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Dependent claims 2-11, 14, 16-18, and 22-24 depend from one of allowable independent claims 1, 13, and 21, and are allowable by virtue of this dependency as well as for the additional features that they recite.

Rejoinder of Claim 14

Dependent claim 14 stands withdrawn, as being directed to a non-elected species. However, claim 14 depends from allowable generic claim 13. Accordingly, claim 14 should be rejoined and is allowable by virtue of its dependency from allowable claim 13, as well as for the additional features that it recites.

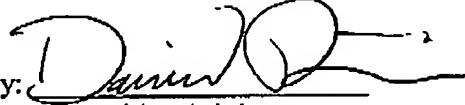
Conclusion

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1-11, 13, 14, 16-18, and 21-24 are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, rejoinder of claim 14, and an early notice of allowance.

If any issue remains unresolved that would prevent allowance of this case, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney to resolve the issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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